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Plastic Bag Holder

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to a handle device, and more particularly to a handle device that will hold several small plastic bags commonly used at grocery stores and other convenience markets.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

It is common for individuals to attempt to transport many articles at one time; often this is accomplished by placing several articles in bags. These bags most often have handles attached to them for ease of transport. However, in many instances an individual will attempt to carry several bags at a time.

One example includes trips to the local grocery store where purchases are placed into plastic bags for the customer to transport home. Though the bags are convenient for carrying several articles, generally more than one bag is necessary to include all purchases made. This necessitates the customer attempting to carry several plastic bags, often weighted down with many items. Attempting to hold these bags in the user's bare hands can be painful and difficult.

It is known in the art to use a holder or handle upon which several bags may be placed. These handles are ergonomically designed so as to allow for ease of use and reduce strain on the user's hand. One type of prior art holders simply provides a space which may contain the bags and which is then grasped by the hand. U.S. Patent No. 5,651,575 discloses such device; however, devices similar to these are not very

ergonomic and are bulky and provide little additional comfort. Another method includes attaching a hook to a larger handle such as that disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 5,645,306. Though these devices provide a slight increase in ease of use, they are limited as to the amount that they can carry and provide little in the way of securing the bags onto the handle. A final device provides a locking mechanism as that disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 5,441,323. This final locking handle, however, is no longer one continuous piece. Rather, the locking mechanism is a separate ring that is not permanently integrated into the device.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of the present invention to provide a device that creates a platform into which bag handles may be securely locked. It is an additional object of the present invention to reduce stress on the user's hands when carrying several bags. Additionally, the present invention provides the device in a unitary construction of a durable medium that is long wearing yet flexible enough to allow a fully integrated interlocking mechanism.

Further areas of applicability of the present invention will become apparent from the detailed description provided hereinafter. It should be understood however that the detailed description and specific examples, while indicating preferred embodiments of the invention, are intended for purposes of illustration only, since various changes and modifications within the spirit and scope of the invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art from this detailed description.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention will become more fully understood from the detailed description and the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of the present invention in its unlocked position.

Figure 2 is a plan view of the present invention in its locked position.

Figure 3 is a plan view of the present invention in its unlocked position.

Figure 4 is a plan view of the present invention in an unlocked position with bags placed in the device.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring to Figure 1 the handle device 10 can be seen to be a continuous piece of material with two distinct regions 16 and 18, later described. A first end of the handle device 26 includes a bulb 12. A second end of the handle device 22 includes a bulb receiving area 14. The material from which the handle device 10 is constructed allows for enough flexibility to enable a user to move the first end 26 relative to the second end 22. By moving the first end 26 in the direction of arrow A and the second end 22 in the direction of arrow B the bulb 12 may be removed from or moved into the bulb receiving area 14. The design of the handle device 10 and the properties of the material are such that when the handle device 10 is in the unlocked position a gap between the first end 26 and the second end 22 of the handle device 10 appears.

With continuing reference to Figure 1 and further reference to Figure 2, the locked handle device 10 may be described. When the bulb 12 is received in the bulb receiving area 14 the handle device 10 is locked. When the handle device 10 is in the

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locked position, both regions 16 and 18 of the handle device 10 are fully enclosed and more definitely circumscribed. The hand region 16 allows for the user to place his hand in the handle device 10. Finger indentations 28 are formed in the upper portion of the handle device 10 in the hand region 16, providing additional comfort during use. Furthermore, the hips 24 are also close together when the handle device 10 is in the locked position. The hips 24, when closed, form the bottom portion of the hand region 16. Moreover, the hips 24 create the top portion and closure of the strap region 18. Straps of bags 30 may be placed in the strap region 18, as shown in Figure 4. The bulb 12 is then placed within the bulb receiving area 14 thus locking the handle device 10 closed. The strap region 18 is also closed.

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Turning reference to Figures 1 and 3 the handle device 10 while open may be examined. From the closed position the first end 26 may be moved in the direction of arrow A and the second end 22 may be moved in the direction of arrow B to allow for the handle device 10 to be opened and more particularly directly opening the hand region 16. In doing this the hips 24 are also separated thus opening the strap region 18. In the open position articles may be introduced into the strap region 18. Once straps 30 are introduced into the strap region 18, as seen in Figure 4, the handle device 10 may then be re-closed, as in Figure 2, following the procedure outlined above.

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As previously mentioned, the device 10 is of a one piece monolythic structure which can be fabricated by well known plastic injection molding technology. If desired, a suitable name, logo or advertising indicia can be molded directly on the device 10 and/or appropriate labeling can be affixed to either side of the device 10 adjacent the bulb 12 and bulb receiving area 14.

The invention being thus described, it will be obvious that the same may be varied in many ways. Such variations are not to be regarded as a departure from the spirit and scope of the invention, and all such modifications as would be obvious to one skilled in the art are intended to be included within the scope of the following claims.